

BLOOMFIELD TOWN COUNCIL
COMMUNITY SERVICES SUBCOMMITTEE

There was a regular meeting for the above-reference subcommittee held at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 7, 2014 in Conference Room #5, Bloomfield Town Hall, 800 Bloomfield Avenue, Bloomfield, CT.

Present Committee Members were: Councilors Seldon, Washington and Neuwirth

Also present were: Philip K. Schenck, Jr., Town Manager, Camilla Jones, Director of Social & Youth Services, Yvette Huyghue-Pannell, Director of Senior Center, David Melesko, Director of Leisure Services, Jane Low, Chair of Beautification, Tollie Miller, Chair of CEEC and India Rodgers, Clerk of Council.

Guest was: Racquel Kennedy, Victory Energy Solutions, Inc. and Ms. Donna Banks, former Town Council member and Chair of Community Services Subcommittee

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m.

Report from Committee Chairs

Leisure Services - Parks and Recreation

Mr. David Melesko, Director of Leisure Services reported the following updates of the department:

- In collaboration with the Board of Education, after school programs for 5th – 8th graders are being held at Leisure Services with approximately 120 kids.
- An extended day was offered for Parent Teacher Conference with the Board of Education
- Leisure Services Fall classes schedule ended in December, however youth sports are ongoing
- On Saturday, December 7, 2013 the Colors of the Season was sponsored by Leisure Services on the Bloomfield Town Green
- On December 13, 2013, Family Bingo was held with 25 participants
- December vacation program was offered to residents to supplement for the Christmas school vacation break

- Drop-in volleyball is being offered for the winter months
- 30+ basketball league held at Carmen Arace Middle School
- On Sunday, December 1, 2013 the travel BYBL hosted their first game at Leisure Services gym. Staff assisted with registrations.
- The Portable ice skating rink has been installed and is ready for use
- The department launched a new MyRec.com software registration which is now web based
- A bid submission will be sent in by end of January 2014 to request a vendor for pool sandblasting & painting
- 2 high school students completed their community services requirements for Civics class with the department.
- Summer employment applications were mailed to returning applicants/employees.
- Welcome to Bloomfield flags were displayed throughout the town
- Fence repairs and a wooden guard rail will be installed at the newly renovated Hubbard Street Park
- Capital Improvements were submitted for review to Town Manager & Finance Director
- The Master Parks Plan will be completed by mid-April 2014. GIS mapping and inventory of all parks will give a brief synopsis of utilization needs and an overall condition report of each site.

Social & Youth Services

Mrs. Camilla Jones, Director of Social & Youth Services reported the following updates of the department:

- During the month of December Youth Services sponsored a 2 day Winter Camp entitled “Beat the Cold Winter Camp” for the Peer Power Plus Program participants grades 3rd – 6th from 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. They also participated in intergenerational activities with seniors, cooking/baking, arts & crafts.
- Police & Youth Community Crusaders group is comprised of 17 youth & 6 police officers. The group sponsored a Kids Winter Jam in Leisure Services for approximately 50 youth with bounce houses and other recreational activities. The Crusaders also went bowling as a group. This group is funded by a \$10,000 grant from juvenile justice to promote positive relationships between police and youth.
- The Youth Action Club went on an overnight retreat to Camp Jewell for leadership & team building. Currently there are 17 active high school students in this club.
- The Capital Area Substance Abuse Council (CASAC) Prevention Committee is planning a Greater Hartford Youth Conference in Spring 2014 on mental health issues involving youth.

- In collaboration with Leisure Services and the Board of Education participate and host 5 after school groups with 5th – 8th graders. These groups are funded by Bloomfield Public Schools.
- Disney on Ice – Princesses and Heroes production held at the XL Center is scheduled for Wednesday, January 8, 2014 at 7:00 p.m. There are 50 participants expected to attend.
- Thus far, the department has completed a total of 700 Energy Assistance applications including CRT, Town and Operation Fuel funding sources. Most of these applications assist residents with utility shut-off preventions, negotiating with utility companies for lower payments and referrals for furnace replacements and/or repairs.
- Our Season of Giving Holiday program adopted 192 children for toy drive with over 50 donors as well as 94 Thanksgiving baskets collected for the holidays.
- The department received 4 evictions/foreclosures ejectment notices for the month of December.
- Intensive case management services for over 125 cases this month including areas in housing-eviction/foreclosure prevention, mental health, financial, medical issues and DSS advocacy issues.
- Insurance Enrollment/Medicare advocacy – Medicaid Food stamp applications, disability applications with Social Security Administration
- The department created a Veteran's resource webpage as a part of a State of Connecticut mandate. The webpage has been uploaded on the town website.
- The Bloomfield Interfaith Clergy Association will host a Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration services on January 19, 2014 at 7:00 p.m. at First Congregational Church.
- The department would like to explore the development of a more extensive Case Management database to track accurate statistics
- Recipient of \$4000.00 from the Rotary Club
- Recipient of \$3000.00 from the Farmington Bank Foundation for fuel bank

Senior Services

Mrs. Yvette Huyghue-Pannell, Director of Senior Services reported that the following updates of the department:

- There were 2 Foodshare distributions held in the month of December 2013 with a total of 138 participants.
- The Community Renewal Team (CRT) lunch site at Bestor Lane has been closed. CRT would like to expand to the Senior Center for a total of 5 consecutive days. The Senior Center cannot accommodate this request due to space restraints. Federation Homes has adequate space available to receive additional participants.

- Nurse Days are sponsored once a month by Duncaster and every Tuesday morning by the Bloomfield -West Hartford Health District.
- Mini bus rides continue to grow. Donations increased in November totaling \$1750.00 as a result of pursuing late payments of riders. The suggested donation to ride the mini bus is \$40.00 per year. There has also been an increase of 4 – 5 new riders per month.
- Meals on Wheels – As of December 2, 2013, the Senior Center is no longer providing meals to state clientele. Staff did make arrangements for this population to be covered by other service providers. The Senior Center will only deliver to private pay clients only. The State of Connecticut has new mandates around the Meals on Wheels provisions.
- The department held special events including: Paula Lebowitz, Registered Dietician sponsoring healthy eating, Women's holiday breakfast held at Alexandria Manor, Bingo holiday sponsored by Wellcare, Intergenerational event – in collaboration with Bloomfield Social & Youth Services, UCONN nursing students health related programs– returning in the Fall 2014 and a licensed social worker who continues to conduct – bereavement/caregiving groups
- The Nintendo Wii team lost east coast championship. They are eager to regain their status next season.
- Departmental Trips included: UCONN Women's Basketball game – Madison Square Garden, Wadsworth Atheneum, Bright Nights – Forest Park, Foxwoods and Mohegan Casino, Lunch bunch at Rein's Deli
- The Senior Center Re-Accreditation process is underway. The department was notified that their senior notebook is in 100% in compliance.
- The department is also collaborating with Prosser Library to sponsor mini concerts. The next concert is with the Hartford Symphony in March 2014 at the Senior Center.
- The Senior Job Bank project is underway as well. Mr. Robert Cave, Executive Director of the Seniors Job Bank in West Hartford. He also will coordinate the Senior Job Bank in Bloomfield until a volunteer position has been filled. Most jobs that seniors are seeking are personal services.

Beautification Committee

Mrs. Jane Low, Chair of the Beautification Committee reported that the plant order has been submitted for Spring 2014. Mrs. Low stated that she was contacted by a family member of Mrs. Sandra Belliveau, former Town Council member who passed recently. The family would like a memorial tree planted for Mrs. Belliveau.

There was a lengthy discussion regarding memorializing an individual who has made significant contributions to the town.

Councilor Neuwirth inquired about a formal standard town policy regarding memorializing individuals' contributions to the Town of Bloomfield.

Mr. Schenck, Jr. will research the history regarding donated gifts to the town. He will also provide a brief report at the next scheduled meeting of this subcommittee.

Conservation, Energy and Environment Committee (CEEC)

Ms. Tollie Miller, former Chair of the CEEC reported the following updates on activities held for June 2012 – June 2013:

Clean Energy and Conservation

- The Clean Energy Community Pledge to reduce energy consumption by 20% by 2018 and use 20% renewable energy by 2018 was approved 10/22/2012 by the Town Council.
- As a result of this and the Home Energy Solution (HES) program, the Town of Bloomfield was the first community in Connecticut to earn a \$10,000 Bright Idea Grant from CL&P. This grant was directed to the Department of Public Works to underwrite the cost of a town wide investment grade building audit by Ameresco. (Exclusive of school buildings)
- The HES program resulted in 224 energy audits to town residents and netted \$14,975 for the Bloomfield Fuel Bank. This program is ongoing.

Greenway

- A federal grant of \$1.5 million was procured to underwrite 80% of the costs for Section 1 of the Bloomfield link in the East Coast Greenway.
- A public meeting was held in January of 2013 over which Jonathan Thiesse presided
- Committee member Kevin Gough continues to consult with Mr. Thiesse. The first section runs from northern Bloomfield to Rte. 189 south of Tariffville. BL company is contracted to complete the design phase for Section 1. Construction will begin in spring of 2015.

Natural Resources

- Lisa Lane Farm purchase is nearing completion. \$300,000 was raised through federal and state grants and individual donations. This Urban Farm will stay in agriculture and provide a walking trail. The town will own the farm; Wintonbury Land Trust (WLT) will hold the federal conservation easement.
- Hawk Hill Farm is being purchased for \$612,000 from federal, state and foundation grants. The Farm will stay agriculture, possible as a CSA (Community Supported

Agriculture). The WLT will own the farm, and the Town will hold the conservation easement. This is a critical link in the LaSalette Trail, as well as wildlife corridors.

- CEEC members assisted WLT in the purchase of Stout Fields in December 2012. This property will be maintained as grassland habitat. It contains the western end of LaSalette Trail with access to Penwood Park and the New England Trail. The purchase price of \$325,000 was also raised through federal and foundation grants, as well as donations to the Wintonbury Land Trust.
- These purchases total almost 70 acres, paid for by grants and contributions.

Ms. Racquel Kennedy of Victory Energy Solutions presented information regarding the benefits of a home energy assessment through the Home Energy Solutions program. Ms. Kennedy also elaborated on the various new marketing strategies and promotional events for the upcoming spring season within town.

2014 Community Services Subcommittee Meeting Schedule

Councilor Seldon suggested that the Community Services subcommittee to meet on a quarterly basis rather than once a month. Other subcommittee members agreed with this recommendation due to the lack of new business for discussion to meet on a monthly basis.

Councilor Neuwirth inquired about the purpose of the community services subcommittee, charges, attendance and members.

The following quarterly meeting schedule below was recommended by subcommittee members:

- **January 7, 2014**
- **March 4, 2014**
- **June 3, 2014**
- **September 2, 2014**
- **December 2, 2014**

It was moved by Councilor Washington, seconded by Councilor Neuwirth and voted unanimously to recommend to the full Town Council that the Community Services Subcommittee will meet on a quarterly basis and any other additional meeting as needed.

New Business

Ms. Donna Banks, former Town Council member proposed the use of the old kitchen area located at 330 Park Avenue for a concession stand. This stand would be utilized for special programs and sporting events. The purpose of creating this concession stand is to fundraise for the Back to School Fun Fair as well as for the local fuel and food banks.

There was discussion among subcommittee members about staffing, volunteers or external vending services.

Councilor Seldon suggested the submission of a proposal itemizing details for the concession stand area.

Ms. Banks also inquired about the status of funding for the 2014 Back to School Fun Fair. She reminded the subcommittee of the request for this event to be included in budget negotiations for FY 2014/2015.

Adjournment

It was moved by Councilor Washington, seconded by Councilor Neuwirth to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 p.m.